

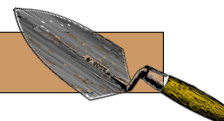


Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



Volume 22 Issue 3

Autumn 2019



A word from the Chair

I hope you've all enjoyed your summer. It was certainly a busy one for Apparch members as we "Dug Deeper" into the fields and gardens of Appleby. Demand for all events was extremely high and we were delighted to introduce so many to the delights of scraping layers of clay out of a damp trench. Some of the attendees have even become members and we now look forward to seeing them again as we commence the Autumn lecture series next month - Marion Barter telling us about the recent survey of the Moot Hall.

I think I'll also remember this summer for some of the most entertaining outings I've experienced with Apparch. See further into this newsletter for the details. Just to say, if you missed Eskdalemuir, you missed a treat!

But to end on a sad note, as you read on you'll find a few words from Phyl Rouston who, I'm sorry to say, is moving away from the area to begin a new life in Scotland. Phyl is a founder member of Apparch and has worked tirelessly to make it such a success. I'm sure you'll all wish to join me in saying how much we'll miss her and how we wish both her and her husband, Nick, every happiness in their new home.

Martin Joyce

To all my friends,

Little did I realise at our April meeting that I would be living in St Andrews by the September one. As an original member of the group and long term office bearer I am sorry not to be able to thank you, in person for your support and friendship over the years. I have very much enjoyed being a member of the group and seeing it develop. I will continue with my membership and look forward to learning what you are up to through the Newsletter.

My very best wishes and goodbye, Phyl Rouston



Dig Appleby – Digging Deeper Fieldwork Update



Dig Appleby – Digging Deeper has had a busy first season with 20 days of fieldwork completed and numerous investigations around the town. We began with some fieldwalking in Bongate, which resulted in the recovery of our oldest find so far, a flint arrowhead of Early Bronze Age date. The arrow head is of amber flint but is an unfinished 'arrowhead blank' with two worked sides and one side incomplete.

This summer we followed up on the work started under 'Dig Appleby – Breaking the Ground' and have excavated test pits in Boroughgate and Bongate, with a larger trench at St Anne's Hospital, and an open area excavation at Castle Bank Farm. The test pits have increased our assemblage of medieval pottery, and at The Limes we identified the foundation of a medieval timber structure or wall. In Bongate we have excavated two test pits in the garden of the former Courtfield Hotel (where a cobbled surface was identified) and one at Beechcroft (the former garden centre). We have also carried out geophysical surveys in Bongate using our new survey equipment and identified medieval ridge and furrow cultivation close to the centre of town.

In July we opened up a trench at the rear of the garden of St Anne's Hospital as part of the CBA Festival of Archaeology. This coincided with some of the hottest days of the year, but thankfully the residents of St Anne's came to the rescue with much needed gazebos for shade! We had over 160 visitors during the week, all of whom were given a tour of the excavation by Tricia Shaw. Thanks to the hard work of the volunteers we identified a very large medieval pit.

Contents

Digging in Appleby, medieval lead tokens, the Towton battlefield, Eskdalemuir hill forts and stone circles, old tanks and ghost villages, Long Meg, other stones and the Winter Lecture Programme



Excavating St Anne's Hospital



This was sealed beneath several layers of garden soil, from which we recovered further medieval pottery and animal bone. This included a cache of animal horn cores, suggesting the horn was being utilised nearby. In the medieval period it was often used to make items such as cups and spoons. At the same time, across the river, Wardell Armstrong staff were excavating at the site of Roy Ashley's Garage, and finding medieval buildings. We have been promised a full report on their investigation in due course!

Our season came to a close with the excavation of a 5m by 5m area to further investigate a building previously identified at Castle Bank Farm on the road to Burrells. We found the foundations of stone walls, cobbled surfaces, and timber stalls, indicating that the building was probably a post-medieval cow house. This was evidently demolished in the early 19th century, much of the stone having been robbed out for use in nearby buildings.

The archaeological work will continue over the winter as we analyse the finds and soil-samples recovered from the excavations and produce a report on the work so far. We will also be planning our further investigations for next year, which we hope will include new areas within and around the town. And breaking news. We now have our own resistivity surveying equipment and carried out our first survey on Bongate Hill - a significant step forward in our research capabilities.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who have helped make the project a success so far. If anyone wishes to stay informed, and has not yet signed up, please send your details to info@cadrus.co.uk. You can also follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ApplebyArchaeology/>

Martin Railton

Lead tokens in Medieval England & finds from Holme Cultram Abbey, Cumbria



Kate Rennicks gave a talk about medieval lead tokens found at Holme Cultram Abbey to the Appleby Archaeological Group on the 14th February. She started by pointing out how our interpretation of archaeological remains and the people responsible are sometimes biased because of our tendency to assume they had similar motives and preferences to our own. However her research into medieval tokens suggested past times were often far more complex than might initially appear.

Holme Cultram Abbey in northern Cumbria was founded by Cistercian monks in 1150 on land initially held by Prince Henry of Scotland and later ceded to Henry II of England in 1157. The Abbey initially prospered on reclaimed land along the Solway, producing wool and salt, but later declined. When the monastery community was dissolved in 1538, part of the Abbey was saved as a parish church. Since then, it has been altered and restored at least three times, the last after a devastating fire in 2006 when many of the original monastery records were destroyed. Archaeological excavation of the Abbey site in 2015 uncovered the cloister, refectory, warming room, kitchen, infirmary and Chapter House. Over 40 lead tokens were found in the Chapter House area of 13-16mm in diameter with nine different designs. Motifs on the obverse and reverse sides of the tokens depicted blacksmith tools, boat and scales, flowers, a crozier, a leaping stag, fleur

de Lys, stag or cow head denoting a grant of meat, something indecipherable, and a crowned R, perhaps related to a grant by Royal Charter from Richard I to Inglewood, or a token of authority.

The tokens were of almost pure lead with the exception of the crowned R, which was gilded on the obverse and were dated from 1300-1300AD. The lead is assumed to have come from mines at Alston Moor and Caldbeck, where the Abbey had land holdings with evidence of metal working at New Cowper and in the abbey precinct itself.

Similar tokens appeared to have been used fairly widely across England at this time. A 1204 Sentences Commentary by Richard Fishacre reported that tokens of tin were given by the king to paupers on which they could claim charity at a later time. Parliament Rolls from 1402 stated "*the commons prayed for a remedy from the great hardship among the poor on account of the scarcity of small coins, which used to be the most useful form of money, but are now scarce, because none are made.*" In 1508-13 Erasmus wrote "*..... nowadays Flanders is familiar with copper coins, England with lead ones*". These statements highlight the lack of proper coinage throughout England during this period and suggest that tokens of both tin and lead were used as currency instead.

Although of significant archaeological importance, tokens are often recovered by amateur metal

detectorists and it is uncertain how many have been found. Museum collections are typically small and the ones held in private collections are rarely analysed properly, are poorly dated and of uncertain provenance without proper archaeological context. Consequently research about tokens is limited and geographically biased. Only 68 of the 1388 officially recorded tokens are considered of 'northern' origin. This bias reflects the typically more rugged terrain of northern Britain generally avoided by detectorists. Some 1250 tokens recovered from the Thames foreshore and nearby were analysed in significant detail. These were found to be made of tin, pewter and lead and issued between 1200 and 1672.

Tokens were used in various ways. In Mereaux and Notre dame de Paris, chaplains received tokens for attending church services. At Calais and St Omer tokens issued by the ecclesiastical authorities could be exchanged for food and drink at approved inns and were then redeemed by the issuing authority. At Nevers in France possession of particular tokens gave the holder the right to cry (advertise), carry and sell certain commodities. As tokens have often been recovered around ports such as London, Dublin and Paris they were assumed to serve some purpose in international trade. However none were found during extensive excavations of Southampton port suggesting they were only of local significance.

The largest cache of medieval lead tokens ever found was in Dublin. The so-called 'Winetavern' series excavated in 1962-3 includes 2061 tokens with 18 designs dating from 1250-1275. They are thought to have been used for trade in local taverns. Fifty 13-15th century tokens were discovered at Trig Lane in London. These included some Winetavern examples, suggesting they had value outside their area of origin. Tokens have also been found in Cambridgeshire (Ramsay Abbey), Suffolk (St Nicolas or 'Big Boy' token). Gloucester (St Mary de Lode) and Essex (Waltham Abbey).

There were thirteen Cistercian monasteries in the north, from the borders of Lancashire and Yorkshire to the Scottish borders. Many are associated with lead tokens ... the guest house at Kirkstall Abbey, at Newminster, at Tintern Abbey dated to 1250-1300, and at Rievaulx Abbey. A mixed collection of stamped and cast round and square tokens was discovered at Fountains Abbey and token mould was at Dundrennan, Scotland in the 1990s. Tokens excavated at these sites and at Dundrennan Abbey in particular, provide a very useful context for those found at Holme Cultram as the two Abbey's held adjacent lands in the south of Scotland.

The design and lettering on the Holme Cultram



Abbey tokens seems to tie function to place and perhaps to Abbey charters. The letters SEL appearing on some tokens probably represents the French for salt. Some depicting ships may refer to the Abbeys trading boats. Perhaps such tokens might have been used in exchange for commodities such as salt or ale at trading ports. There is also an association of the Abbey with Flimby (formerly Flemingby). Flimby had forestry rights granted by Richard I and tokens depicting cows or deer may have been exchanged for meat or hunting.

Medieval tokens were clearly used as a way of paying or exchanging goods or services in more local situations where universally recognized coinage was unavailable. The tokens appear to denote something was promised or that something would happen by exchanging them. Presumably this could only have worked successfully where the issuing authority was recognized and trusted by the users. Such tokens would have provided a way to manage the flow of goods around the estates – an abbey might issue tokens to local granges or traders in exchange for goods or labour to be redeemed at some later time. Alternatively a beneficiary of charity or an abbey tenant could provide the abbey with goods or labour in exchange for tokens with redeemable value. Or perhaps such exchanges might have occurred between a beneficiary of charity or tenant, and granges or traders so long as the tokens were mutually recognized and accepted as having a certain exchangeable value. The Cistercian Abbeys were well placed to issue such tokens giving their local populations a licence to draw upon its store of food or other assets. How far tokens issued by one Abbey were recognized by the wider community or other Abbeys is uncertain. However although the Cistercian monasteries were often isolated in remote locations, there were probably close ties between them, quite possibly with commercial and financial links.

By the end of the 14th century the economic fortunes of the Abbeys had changed. During the late 13th century many houses specialising in wool production

overextended themselves by selling wool (and crops) several years in advance to Italian merchants. This led to financial disaster in 1280 when a major outbreak of sheep scab decimated flocks and they then had to purchase expensive wool on the open market to fulfill their obligations. By the end of the century, Fountains Abbey was in debt by over £6,000 – a huge sum at that time and the others fared little better. The number of monks began to decline and the Cistercians became less popular as new urban friaries were established. Abbey granges were devastated during Scottish incursions during the early 14th century when the Abbeys were required to support the English armies. The Black Death decimated the population in the middle of the century with a further negative impact on trade, economic growth and working population. The use of tokens may have begun to decline at this time as a result.

The Mitchiner and Skinner review of English tokens published in 1983 now requires significant revision, as understanding of their several functions had grown, with increasing evidence of their use across the

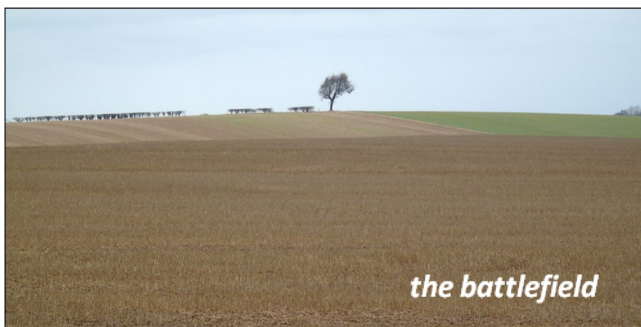
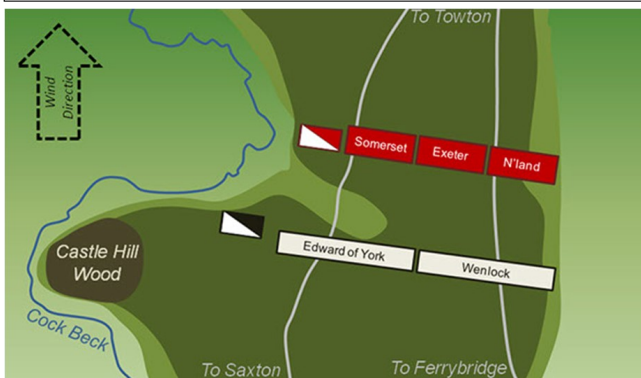
country and not just in the south or east. They may even have had different local functions though without written records this will never be clear.

In her summary at the end of the talk, Kate highlighted the importance of previously unknown token series of generally similar design with minor variations, associated with the Cistercian monasteries in the north of England. The use of such tokens within the Cistercian monastic system probably provided a simple pragmatic way to encourage trade in service and goods. With increasing understanding, it is now clear that many more token assemblages need to be studied and analysed in detail, if we are to understand their purpose more completely at both local and national levels.

Reports on the excavations can be read in more detail at <https://www.grampush Heritage.co.uk/projects/abbey-town-survey-and-excavation/> headed related downloads. Reference: Mitchiner, M. and Skinner A., 1983. 'English Tokens. 1200 To 1425' in *British Numismatic Journal* 53, 29 – 77.

Patricia Shaw

The Archaeology of the Towton Battlefield



Edward IV (Yorkist) defeated Henry VI (Lancastrian) at the Battle of Towton on 29th March 1461 and became the King of England. Some 28,000 men were killed during the course of the battle ... the bloodiest encounter ever fought on English soil. Lord John Clifford of Appleby Castle was one of King Henry's commanders so it is likely that many men from Appleby fought there.

Because of the unique soil conditions, the Towton battle site is a treasure trove of archaeological artefacts preserved by the dry conditions and underlying band of magnesian limestone. The first hand gun and bullet ever recorded on a European battlefield were discovered at Towton, together with welded and mass produced arrow heads, spurs, belt buckles and strap ends. The distribution of this weaponry records where the Yorkist arrow storm hit the Lancastrian archers and defines where the battle lines were drawn.

When Towton Hall was enlarged in the 1990's, a mass grave was discovered under the foundations with skeletons of men who were killed during the battle. A detailed forensic study of the remains by Bradford University found nearly all had multiple head fractures with little evidence of wounds on the forearms, suggesting they had been brutally executed. In addition serrated marks on the skulls implied their ears had been cut off as souvenirs, a grisly reminder of how bitter this battle had become. So when Edward IV ordered that no mercy or ransom should be given, he left visible proof that his instructions were carried out to the letter.

Adrian Waite

The Eskdalemuir Prehistoric Trail

An expedition to Eskdalemuir was Harry Hawkins idea and I can't say I thought much of it - it sounded wet, midge-infested and miles and miles away from Appleby. But the idea stuck and eventually blossomed when young Cathy Hooper appeared amongst us to explain how wrong we were. She had actually worked in the area and knew how interesting it was. A preliminary recce established that the Eskdalemuir valley was in fact an easy drive up the motorway and that its archaeology was really quite superb.

Cut forward to 20th July 2019. A small convoy of Appleby Archaeology members drove out of Langholm up the narrow, windy valley leading towards Eskdalemuir. It had all taken some organizing, but a good number of members had been convinced by our descriptions and we were 14-strong on the day - a very satisfactory turnout for a trip that would prove to be truly memorable.



It had been very wet overnight and we drove through a further heavy shower as we headed towards our first site, Boonies, a tiny but well-defended Romano-British farmstead, just beside the road. Magically, just as we parked, the sun came out and stayed that way for pretty much for the rest of the day. Boonies was interesting, giving a strong sense of the terror that must have been an everyday feature of life there in earlier times. The site is just big enough for four or five round-houses and surrounded by earth banks some ten feet high. These, in turn were presumably topped by some sort of palisade originally. Further along the valley, we passed a whole series of even more paranoid fortresses, this time built high up on the steep, pointy hillocks overlooking the river far below.

There were so many sites on offer that we would have exhausted ourselves trying to visit them all, so we just chose one, Castle O'Er, the pick of the bunch.



Castle O'er is an Iron age fort constructed during in two major phases with an inner enclosure (II) built into an earlier structure (IA-B). There are numerous traces of timber round houses (K-T) within the interior some of which were built after the fort had any defensive function. The annexe (C) dates from after the first period and the south-western entrance (IIA) was refortified during the second. The linear earthworks H, G, D and E also reflect different phases of construction. The visible defences were constructed during the 1st millennium AD

The Eskdalemuir Prehistoric Trail is well-provided with explanatory signs and car-parking and we had no trouble in finding the "Castle" (in fact all these sites are extremely conveniently accessed from the road), setting off up a steep hill through the burgeoning, slippery bracken. I had been worried that the more dilapidated members of Apparch would struggle with "steep and slippery" slope, but we were clearly made of sterner stuff and in no time at all before were all at the top, enjoying the huge 360 degree views of Southern Scotland. What must it have been like to have actually lived up here? We had inspected Harry's excellent survey of Castle O'Er, back in the car park, and now looked around expecting to see a large number of hut circles enfolded by a series of encircling banks and ditches as shown on the map. Unfortunately, the Castle O'Er gardeners had let us down and most of this was obscured by lush summer vegetation. Never mind, the best bit was quite obvious ... the south-western gateway of the fort - a long, claustrophobic defile with steep ramparts. It was very easy to imagine Iron Age inhabitants high up on either side, chucking stuff down at uninvited visitors All very atmospheric!

Our next stop was lunch at the Community Hub in Eskdalemuir itself. As Eskdalemuir is really not much more than half a dozen houses, a church and a couple of T junctions, you might have imagined that lunch would be a packet of crisps sitting on a wooden bench. Not a bit of it. In fact, we were treated to a wide range of home-cooked soups, sandwiches and delectable puddings served up in a superb, modern restaurant. Suffice to say we stayed there for quite a while!

However there is more to life than puddings and archaeology, so we continued up the valley for another couple of miles to take in the "curved ball" site of the programme. It's not every day you get the chance to visit a Buddhist Monastery. The Samye Ling monastery was founded by Tibetan refugees in 1967 and is now a 40-strong community of monks and nuns. The site is fully open to visitors and we were able to wander freely through the beautiful garden, gaping at the various stupas and other unidentifiable monuments before taking off our boots and entering the gilded calm of the temple itself. You could hear the sound of chanting as we left.



Returning in the real world, we continued back down the opposite side of the valley, visiting two further sites with just about enough energy to reach them. Contrasting with the Iron Age sites of the morning, the Loupin' Stanes and the Girdle Stanes are a pair of

Neolithic stone circles, scenically-positioned within half a mile of each other on the open valley floor beside the river. We headed for the Loupin' Stanes first, a circle of some 12 closely-positioned boulders, about 18m in diameter, on a low mound. The name is inspired by

a pair of much larger, squarish stones forming a sort of entrance to the southwest. Supposedly, in the past it was common practice for people to climb onto one of these and "loup" across to the other. Nobody from Appleby Archaeology was tempted to try this.



From here, it was a glorious wade through long grass and wildflowers to the Girdle Stanes, a much larger circle, now partially eroded away by the river. Enough remains to give a clear impression of what it must once have looked like - a substantial circle of some 26 large boulders on an expansive flat site overlooked by low headlands. Perhaps it is fanciful to think this, but it gave me the impression it had been deliberately positioned to afford spectators perched on the surrounding headlands a good view of whatever was going on within the circle. Whatever on a sunny day in July, deeply sunk in drifts of wild meadow-flowers and with the sound of the river hurrying by, it was the perfect spot to finish an excellent day of archaeology.

Your committee will be doing its best to find someone to come and talk to us about the wider archaeology of South West Scotland. There's a lot more to see up here.

Warcop Firing Range and ghost of Burton

I counted nearly 30 heads when Appleby Archaeology arrived for its first "summer outing" at the Warcop Army training centre on May 25th - a respectable army in itself, I thought.

The day started with a briefing from the range officer and by the time he had finished it's only fair to say that we all felt a little apprehensive as we drove out onto the range itself. Things didn't get any better when we walked on to our first site - the ruins of the deserted medieval village of Burton - where we were invited to inspect the various humps and bumps buried in the long grass. These were fine, but the sundry parachutes and strange lumps of battered aluminum that littered the ground about were decidedly not. Most alarming of all, were missile like objects with fins, half-buried in the earth. Unexploded mortar shells perhaps? We held our breath and hurried on.

Although the village of Burton had been deserted before the firing range was created, Burton Hall itself was still in existence, only to be levelled by the army as a demolition exercise.

The Hall has an interesting history with numerous connections to Catholic persecutions in the 16th century and there was some discussion about further study of the site as, despite occasional superficial damage from training operations, it has escaped the far more serious archaeological erosion caused by modern farming. Well maybe, but perhaps we should finish with Appleby and Brackenber first? At least you don't often get blown up there.

Further down the road, we got a chance to clamber over some mangled Chieftain tanks that are now used for target practice. Here was an opportunity, too, to consider the more recent archaeology at Warcop. Clearly it's not restricted to prehistoric remains - a whole history of 20th century military technology lies about, quietly rusting away. Someone should write a book. Any volunteers?

And finally, after a brief inspection of a Romano-British farmstead - one of several on the site, it was time to stretch weary legs and struggle back to the cars. It was a relief to count up and confirm there were the same number of heads coming out that went in.



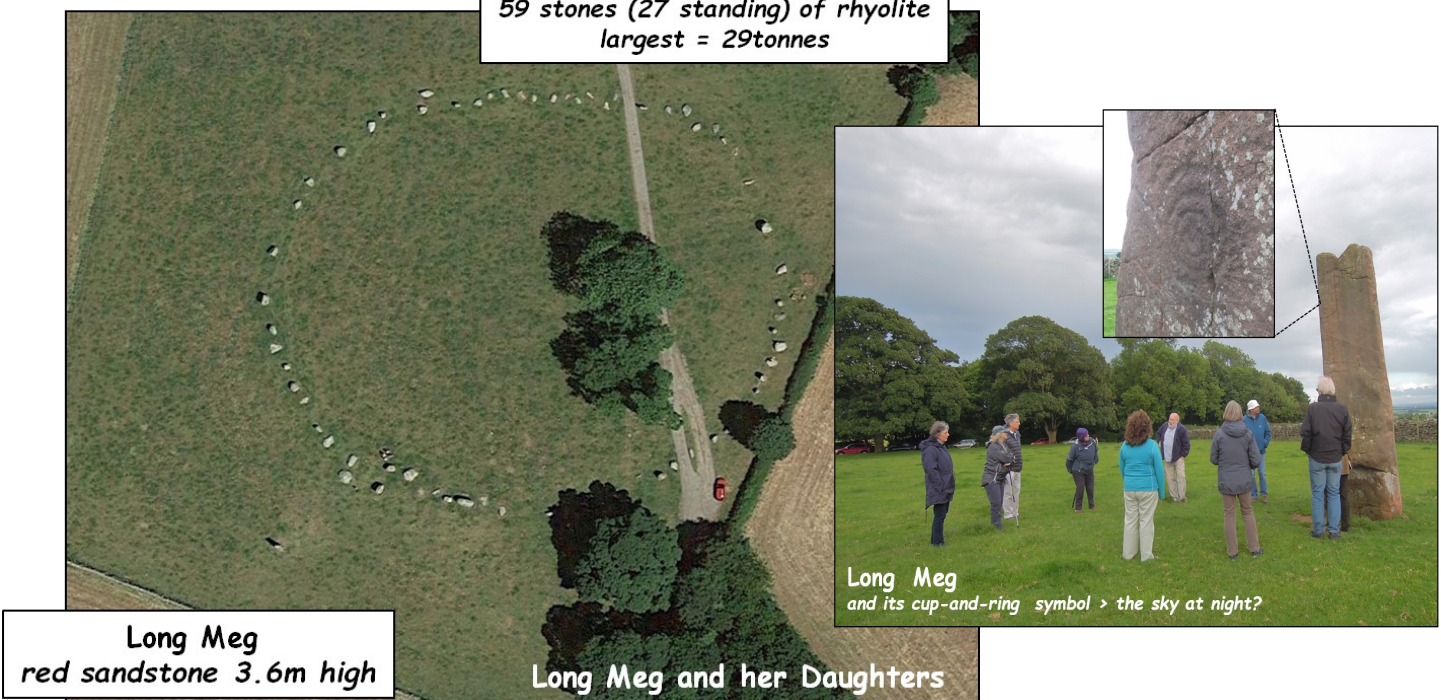
Our thanks to Alexander Sotheran, MoD archaeologist, for giving up the Saturday morning of a Bank Holiday weekend to introduce us to his strange but extremely interesting site.

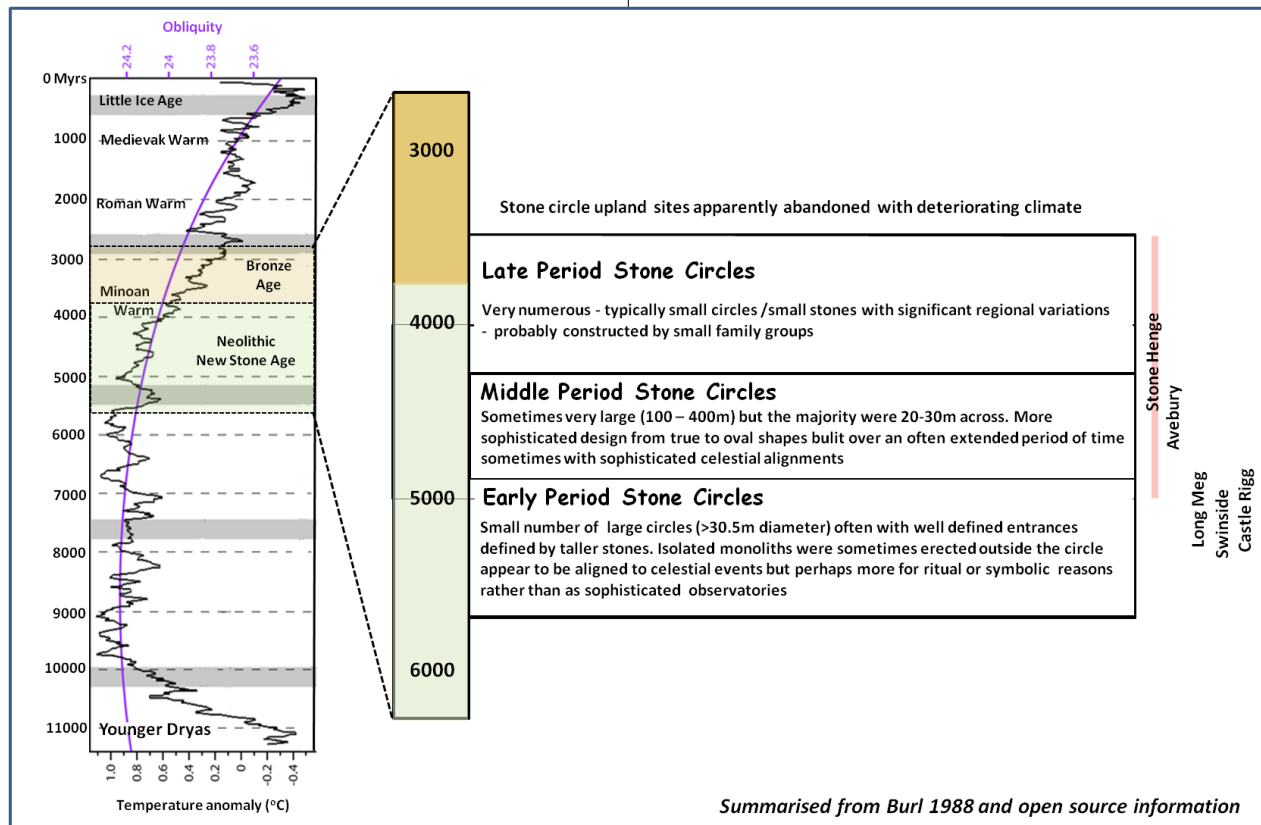
Martin Joyce

Excursion to Long Meg and beyond

A simply **HUGE** number of members turned out to hear Chris Wilson tell us about his experience surveying and excavating Long Meg between 2013 and 2015 with Paul Frodsham. Long Meg is the third-largest stone circle in England

Daughters
100m meter diameter
59 stones (27 standing) of rhyolite
largest = 29tonnes





an audience approaches curious



Little Meg – a question of boulders –



'in-situ' or moved out of the way

and moves away wondering!

and contains some truly massive boulders - a complex and interesting site. Like Stonehenge, there is probably much more to it than the present, visible remains. The sheer size of the boulders alone records a very significant amount of work by a well coordinated team of Neolithic peoples, Paul Frodsham's excavation reports can be found on the web and are well worth reading.

As a bonus we went on to view two less-familiar sites - the Little Meg "circle" and the Glassonby cairn. I'd not previously been to either of these myself. Both were interesting and quite atmospheric and in both case appeared to be "kerbstones" from an eroded burial cairn rather than true stone circles. Nevertheless they are still substantial boulders and in the case of Little Meg, one was beautifully decorated with cup and ring marks. A second decorated boulder from this site has found its way to Penrith museum.

According to the site description on the web, Glassonby was also supposed to feature an elaborately carved boulder, but in the event not even the the eye of faith was able to reveal the slightest trace of this.

Nevertheless it was a very pleasant, educational evening and a good reminder of how well the countryside around Glassonby looks with its wonderful open views across to the Pennines.

Martin Joyce

Winter Lectures

Appleby Moot Hall - Marion Barter
Thursday 10th October

The Moot Hall was probably built around 1596 for the Borough of Appleby, which was established by a royal charter in 1179. Marion Barter will explain the results of the recent assessment of The Moot Hall undertaken as part of the Appleby Heritage Zone Project.

Towton Battlefield Society - Chris Berendt
Thursday 14th November

Research at Vindolanda - Rhys Williams
Thursday 12th December

Rhys Williams is currently studying for a PhD at Teesside University where he is researching the chemical and microbiological factors that determine the preservation of bones. He is also an expert on the three dimensional visualisation of artefacts and will be talking about his work in both of these areas at Vindolanda.